(c) where does Indian Airlines stand comparing private airlines in terms of services and the measures initiated to ensure that services are timely, adequate, continuous and equitable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Indian Airlines engages only established Flight Caterers/Five Star/Reputed Hotels for uplifting meals. The menus and choice of meals offered compare very favourably with other domestic carriers.

(b) Indian Airlines has a set of multiple choice menus which is rotated on daily basis. The menus are changed after a few months so that regular passengers do not find it monotonous.

(c) Indian Airlines has systems in place for checking the quality and quantity of the meals at regular as well as on random basis on departing and arriving flights. Based on the constant feedback from passengers and crew members, immediate corrective action is taken at the caterer/staff level. Best practices prevalent in the domestic aviation industry are adopted by Indian Airlines Limited.

New airport at Muzaffarpur

†2581. SHRI MAHENDRA SAHNI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intend to build an airport in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar; and

(b) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) An airport already exists at Muzaffarpur which belongs to Airports Authority of India (AAI) and is suitable for operation of 20 seater class of aircraft in fair weather condition.

Airstrips in Arunachal Pradesh

2582. SHRI NABAM REBIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of airstrips were constructed by Government in Arunachal Pradesh prior to the Chinese aggression of 1962;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is also a fact that most these airstrips are not maintained by Government and that a number of encroachments are taking place there; and

(c) if so, the details of such airstrips and the steps taken by Government to maintain them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The airstrip at Passighat belongs to Airports Authority of India (AAI) where no encroachment has so far been reported. The airstrips at Along, Daparizo, Tezu and Zero belong to the State Government where AAI maintains civil air terminals and Indian Air Force (IAF) provides air traffic services. Presently, Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd. (PHHL) is operating helicopter services through Along, Daparizo and Zero airstrips. Passighat and Tezu airstrips are presently non-operational.

Purchase of spares for Aircrafts of Indian Airlines/Alliance

2583. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether of late, many aircafts of Indian Airlines and its subsidiary Alliance have been grounded and if so, the number of aircrafts so grounded;

(b) whether many of the grounded aircrafts need repairs and fitment of new spare parts apart from periodic overhauling and if so, whether the Indian and Alliance are in the process of purchasing spares for the grounded planes; and

(c) if not, whether this delay in procurement of spares is a deliberate act to effect savings on spares purchase and thereby inflate the bottom lines of the carriers in balance sheets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PARFUL PATEL): (a) Presently, 10 A-320, 1 A-300 and 1 Dornier DO228 aircraft of Indian Airlines and 3 B-737 and 1 ATR-42 aircraft of Alliance Air are grounded.

(b) Only 1 B-737 aircraft operated by Alliance Air is grounded for unscheduled maintenance at Delhi and is awaiting repair kit from